

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00032 062021Z
ACTION EUR-12

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P 061701Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8017

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0032

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MARR, NATO, IC
SUBJECT: DUAL PURPOSE AIR TERMINAL: FOREIGN MINISTER'S DEMARCHE

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 0004 (B) STATE 1788 (C) STATE 6583
(D) STATE 6590

1. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR ANDERSON DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE REACTED PARTICULARLY TO WHAT HE WAS TOLD DURING HIS JANUARY 5 MEETING WITH THE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, WE DOUBT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER OR FOREIGN MINISTER WILL BE REASSURED BY THAT SESSION SINCE ANDERSEN RECEIVED NO INDICATION OF WHEN THE BUREAUCRATIC AND POLICY PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE DUAL PURPOSE TERMINAL WILL BE RESOLVED OR WHAT THE DECISION MIGHT BE. IN THE MEANTIME, POLITICAL PRESSURES ARE BUILDING UP ON BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER AND, AS EXPECTED, THE PRESENCE OF THE BASE AND THE CONDITIONS FOR THAT PRESENCE REMAIN FOCAL POINTS OF SHARP DISCUSSION.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS LAST POINT, PERHAPS THE EMBASSY IN NOTING THAT NATIONAL ELECTIONS MUST TAKE PLACE BY JUNE 1978 HAS NOT STRESSED SUFFICIENTLY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER COULD CALL THEM EARLIER, E.G., FOR MARCH OR APRIL BEFORE THE FULL IMPACT OF THE INFLATIONARY WAGE SETTLEMENTS OF LAST YEAR WORK THEIR
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WAY THROUGH THE ECONOMY. IF HE WERE TO DO SO, IT WILL BE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO BE ABLE TO SAY SOONER RATHER THAN LATER SOMETHING POSITIVE ON THE DUAL PURPOSE TERMINAL IF HE IS TO QUELL "ARONISM" WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY AND DEFUSE THE LEFTIST OPPOSITION TO THE BASE. WHAT THIS MEANS, OF COURSE, IS THAT IF WE PLAN TO BE HELPFUL TO OUR FRIENDS ON THIS PROBLEM WE WILL

HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY OF ACCELERATING THE DECISION-
MAKING PROCESS IN WASHINGTON.

3. WHAT WE MUST AVOID AT ALL COSTS IS A QUESTION ARISING
IN THE ICELANDERS' MINDS OF OUR GOOD FAITH IN
EXAMINING WHAT IS TO THEM A HIGHLY IMPORTANT ISSUE IN
OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE MORE OUR
CONSIDERATION OF THEIR PROPOSAL IS PROLONGED, THE
GREATER IS THE RISK OF THIS OCCURRING TO OUR LONG TERM
DISADVANTAGE. ALSO, IF THE DECISION IS TO BE NEGATIVE,
THE SOONER WE TELL THEM THE BETTER, SO THAT THEY MAY
START TO PICK UP THE PIECES AS BEST THEY CAN.
BLAKE

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